

Focal Points and Partners Consultative Meeting

25–28 March 2024

Durban, South Africa

Concept Note

Background and Introduction

The Western Indian Ocean region contains diverse coastal and marine ecosystems that support local and national economies. The critical coastal and marine ecosystems also provide valuable ecosystem services including sequestration of carbon. They also provide habitat for marine biodiversity and are considered to be one of the most valuable ecosystems in the world. These ecosystems have also been of great benefit to coastal communities, particularly as sources of livelihood, food and energy. Despite the benefits associated with coastal and marine ecosystems, the anthropogenic stresses on these ecosystems, particularly from land-based sources and activities are increasing and causing damage to the integrity of these ecological systems. The increasing threats arising from land-based sources and activities mean that the ecosystems in the region will continue to be degraded to the point where they will cease to be able to provide essential goods and services, with severe consequences at local, regional and global levels.

Economic development and poverty alleviation are the main targets within the policies of most Western Indian Ocean governments and that realization is directly and indirectly linked to the health of the coastal and the marine environment. Joint efforts and partnerships are required to procure a healthy Western Indian Ocean and to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of management and conservation initiatives. Global and regional governance frameworks continue to bring marine conservation to the forefront of global policy arenas such as the UN's Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), the CBD's strategy and post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), Paris Agreement on Climate change, the ongoing Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), in particular Goal 14 on Oceans and African Union Agenda 2063. Focus has been on ecosystems-based management, nature-based solutions, marine protected areas, marine pollution, climate

change and impacts of ocean acidification, development of green ports and harbours, and protection of biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, including the application of area-based management tools in exclusive economic zones and adjacent areas. Leveraging regional partnerships and collaborations provides a pathway for strengthening the implementation of actions for sustainable management, development, and conservation of the Western Indian Ocean.

The Nairobi Convention and its protocols offer a legal framework and coordinate the efforts of the 10 contracting parties in their efforts to protect, manage and develop their coastal and marine environment. It provides a forum to facilitate intergovernmental discussions on the region's environmental challenges and how to address them. The Contracting Parties of the Convention have been keen on promoting ecosystem-based approaches such as marine spatial planning to promote ocean governance for the blue economy through cooperation, collaboration, and partnerships with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Commissions, regional fisheries management organizations, related intergovernmental organizations and between Contracting Parties as evidenced through various COP Decisions.

Nairobi Convention Work Programme for 2022-2024

The work programme serves as a tool for the secretariat and the collaborating partners to catalyse change in the management of the marine and coastal environment by the Contracting Parties to the Nairobi Convention, thereby contributing to the achievement of agreed goals and targets as they relate to the sustainable development of coasts and oceans. Over 2022-2024 the Nairobi Convention is implementing in a partnership approach, a work programme addressing new and emerging issues prioritized by Contracting Parties such as marine litter and microplastics, ocean acidification, marine protected areas, coastal and marine water quality assessment, a marine spatial planning strategic framework and gender mainstreaming among other thematic areas.

All activities supported by the Nairobi Convention over 2022–2024 are designed to achieve the overall objective of strengthening the role of the Nairobi Convention as a platform for promoting synergies and coordinating the implementation of regional initiatives for the protection of the marine and coastal environment. The work programme is built on four priority areas, namely, i) management and operational support which focuses on

backstopping parties in implementing Conference of Parties (COP) Decisions, development of approaches to ocean financing and ocean governance designed to sustain and enhance the Convention's contribution to comprehensive marine and coastal ecosystem-based management approaches; ii) assessment and conservation of critical habitats and endangered species, which focuses on partner collaboration for the assessment and conservation of critical habitats such as mangroves, coral reefs, seagrasses and endangered species such as shark and rays.; iii) Coordination and legal aspects, which focuses on implementing and updating the existing Nairobi Convention and its protocols, developing and ratifying new protocols, and improving the coordination of activities; iv) Coordination and legal aspects, which focuses on implementing and updating the existing Nairobi Convention and its protocols, developing and ratifying new protocols, and improving the coordination of activities.

Rationale of the Meeting

The meeting is convened in line with the tenth Conference of Contracting Parties to the Nairobi Convention Decision CP.10/1 on approval of the Programme of Work for 2022 – 2024, where the Secretariat was requested to report on the progress of implementation of the Programme of Work 2022-2024 at the regular meetings of national focal points and at the eleventh meeting of the Contracting Parties. The meeting will seek to take stock of all activities and initiatives implemented by the Secretariat through its projects and partners.

As the implementation period for the Programme of Work for 2022 – 2024 draws closer and in preparation for COP11, the meeting will review and give inputs to the draft work programme for 2025 – 2028 and draft Decisions and their justification proposed by the Nairobi Convention Bureau supported by regional experts.

The draft work programme and draft decisions draws from regional priorities as proposed by the Nairobi Convention Contracting Parties, implementation modalities for products developed under the Nairobi Convention Secretariat projects as well as recommendations from the 2023 Western Indian Ocean Science - Policy Platform convened under the theme: Addressing Global Targets in the WIO in Support of a Sustainable Blue Economy. The documents consider global and regional ocean-related initiatives including the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (Ocean Decade), the recently adopted Kunming-

Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Treaty, and global and regional agreements related to plastics in the marine environment.

Specific objective

- Take stock of the progress in implementation of the 2022-2024 work programme,
- Consider the progress made in the implementation of 2021 10th COP Decisions of the Contracting Parties,
- Contribute to the drafting of areas of decisions for subsequent approval by the Contracting Parties and
- Propose thematic areas of implementation under the Nairobi Convention work programme for the period 2025-2028.

Expected Outcomes

- Executive Director's Report on progress in implementation of the 2022-2024 work programme and 10th COP Decisions,
- Draft COP11 decisions and justification for each decision,
- A draft work programme for 2025 – 2028.

Expected Participants

Nairobi Convention Focal Points; Representatives for Regional Economic Communities and Commissions, WIO-C, FARI and other Nairobi Convention Partners.